

# PROKOFIEV

## Piano Concerto No.2



# **Piano Concerto No. 2 by Sergei Prokofiev**

Stage 5 & 6 Teaching Resource

Sydney Symphony Orchestra

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*Through intensive listening students become involved in one of the highest orders of thinking.*

*As a teacher, by bringing students to a concert and studying music in the classroom, you are providing your students with a special pathway to musical knowledge through direct experience of and contact with live music.”*

Richard Gill AO (1941 – 2018)

Conductor, notable educator, and advocate. Richard was the founding Artistic Director of Education at Sydney Symphony. He has inspired generations of musicians through his work and continues to inspire new generations through his legacy.

## Syllabus link

### NSW Curriculum

*Piano Concerto No. 2* by Prokofiev covers a range of topics from the NSW syllabuses:

### Years 7-10 Additional Study Course:

Art Music of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> Centuries

Music for Large Ensembles

### Music 1 Preliminary and HSC:

Music of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> Centuries

Music for Large Ensembles

### Music 2 Preliminary:

Additional Topic: Music 1900-1945

### Music 2 HSC:

Additional Topic: Music 1900-1945

## Music Years 7-10 Stage 4 and Stage 5 Elective Outcomes:

Activities	Linked to Outcomes	Ideas for assessment
Activity 1 Aural and Musicology	4.7, 4.8 5.7, 5.8	Short written responses
Activity 2 Score Reading, Listening and Musicology	4.7, 4.8, 4.9 5.7, 5.8, 5.9	Notation and graphic responses Short written responses
Activity 3 Performance	4.1, 4.2, 4.3 5.1, 5.2, 5.3	Performance
Activity 4 Composition and Musicology	4.4, 4.5, 4.7, 4.8 5.4, 5.5, 5.7, 5.8	Composition Portfolio Discussion
Activity 5 Listening and Score Reading	4.7, 4.8 5.7, 5.8	Short written responses

## Music 1 Outcomes:

Activities	Linked to Outcomes	Ideas for assessment
Activity 1 Aural and Musicology	P2, P4, P6 H2, H4, H6	Short written response Extended written responses
Activity 2 Score Reading, Listening and Musicology	P2, P4, P6 H2, H4, H6	Short written response Extended written responses
Activity 3 Performance, Score Reading and Composition	P1, P3, P5 H1, H3, H5	Performance Short written response Composition Portfolio
Activity 4 Performance and Musicology	P1, P3, P7 H1, H3, H7	Performance Extended oral or written presentation Evaluation
Activity 5 Listening and Score Reading	P2, P4, P6 H2, H4, H6	Short written response

## Music 2 Outcomes:

Activities	Linked to Outcomes	Ideas for assessment
Activity 1 Aural and Musicology	P2, P4, P6 H2, H4, H6	Short written response Extended written responses
Activity 2 Score Reading, Listening and Musicology	P2, P4, P6 H2, H4, H6	Short written response Extended written responses
Activity 3 Performance, Score Reading and Composition	P1, P3, P5 H1, H3, H5	Performance Short written response Composition Portfolio
Activity 4 Performance and Musicology	P1, P3, P7 H1, H3, H7	Performance Extended oral or written presentation Evaluation
Activity 5 Listening and Score Reading	P2, P4, P6 H2, H4, H6	Short written response

## Work: *Piano Concerto No. 2 Op. 16* by Prokofiev

### Composer background

Sergei Prokofiev (1891-1953) was a Russian composer, born in Ukraine, then part of the Russian Empire. He was a leader of the Modernist music movement. His symphonies, orchestral suites and ballets display endless variety and complexity. The music is constantly alternating between driving rhythms and lyrical melodies, between irony and emotional sincerity. His most famous works today, perhaps, are the *Classical Symphony*, the *Romeo and Juliet* ballet score, and the symphonic fairy tale, *Peter and the Wolf*.

Prokofiev championed innovation and its importance to ensuring a composer's longevity. "To write only according to the rules laid down by classical composers of the past means to be only a pupil and not a master. Such a composer is easily understood by his contemporaries but he has no chance of outliving his generation."

Prokofiev left Russia following the Revolution in 1918, moving to the United States and then France. He returned to Soviet Russia in 1936, just when the Soviet regime was beginning its control of the arts, insisting on what it termed as socialist realism or music for the proletariat. Once back in Russia, Prokofiev composed *Peter and the Wolf*, which represented what Prokofiev described as a "new simplicity", and the ballet *Romeo and Juliet* for Moscow's prestigious Bolshoi Ballet.

Works by Prokofiev from the mid-1940s show the influence of Soviet politics. "It carried all of Prokofiev's rhythmic, melodic, and harmonic mannerisms, but sounded less modern; less age-of-steel. Emotionally it was a gentler kind of music, staying close to the principles of Socialist Realism".<sup>1</sup> This was a major change for a composer noted for challenging audiences with his innovative music. Despite these attempts to accommodate the Soviet regime, Prokofiev himself was eventually labelled a traitor for his perceived "formalist perversions". However, Prokofiev continued to compose major works, including the *Symphony-Concerto for cello and orchestra* (1952), written for fellow Russian, Mstislav Rostropovich.

### Work Background

#### ***Piano Concerto No. 2 Op. 16***

Prokofiev was a rebellious, 22-year-old student at the Saint Petersburg Conservatory when he completed the original version of *the Second Piano Concerto* in 1913. He dedicated the work to the memory of Maximilian Schmidthof, a fellow classmate who committed suicide the same year.

The work is scored for an enormous orchestra which includes three trombones, tuba, and an array of percussion instruments. It is set in four movements rather than the traditional three. The Russian pianist, Denis Matsuev has called it "Prokofiev's Everest...In dramatic effect and intensity of emotions, it takes first place among all piano concertos. The first movement is really powerful — it's like a volcano!"

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.worldhistory.org/image/17725/sergei-and-mira-prokofiev/>



The reception for the premiere divided audience and critics alike. According to one review, the Concerto's premiere left listeners "frozen with fright, hair standing on end." Prokofiev declared himself, "pleased that the concerto provoked such strong feelings in the audience." As one commentator observed, "Of course he loved to shock, for he was a spirited young composer. But that, like his wish to be up to date, was an irrelevance. His music expressed himself".

When Prokofiev left Russia, his manuscript for this yet-unpublished concerto remained behind, and it was lost in a fire. In 1923 and early 1924, Prokofiev reconstructed the score. The composer claimed that the revised version incorporated new material that reflected the experience he had gained in the intervening decade, during which he had composed his famous *Third Piano Concerto*. According to Prokofiev, in this version, the music was reborn with more intricate counterpoint, and "the form more graceful — less square." The new version was premiered in Paris, in May 1924, with Prokofiev as soloist, at one of the legendary Koussevitzky concerts.

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### Instrumentation of work

Woodwind	Brass	Percussion	Strings
2 Flutes	4 Horns	Snare Drum	Violin I
2 Oboes	2 Trumpets	Bass Drum	Violin II
2 Clarinets	3 Trombones	Cymbals	Viola
2 Bassoons	Tuba	Tambourine	Cello
		Timpani	Double Bass
		Solo Piano	

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## Listening guide

### Overview:

#### Movement I *Andantino-Allegretto*

The first movement is in sonata form. It begins with a soft, descending line in the clarinet and *pizzicato* strings.

**Andantino**

Clarinet in B $\flat$



This brief, two-bar introduction leads immediately to the piano's statement of the first subject. Prokofiev includes the unusual marking, *narrante* (narrating). This is interpreted with a slight *rubato*. The G minor tonality is masked by open fifths and a suspended fourth. The motivic first subject is accompanied by a chromatic string part, before the piano embarks on a jarring harmonic journey.

Piano




A swirl of ascending arpeggios (Rehearsal Mark - RM 5, Audio Cue 2:34) lead to a dancelike second theme, in the unrelated key of A minor, introduced by the woodwind. Marked *Allegretto*, it has been likened to a gavotte (RM 7, Audio Cue 3:12).

Much of the development and recapitulation are occupied with an extended solo piano cadenza (RM 20, Audio Cue 5:45). The orchestra enunciates the melody while the piano decorates it with splashes of scales. Amid gradually building intensity, the piano becomes a powerful dynamo, described by some commentators as titanic or machine-like. The ultimate, climactic eruption comes with the return of the full orchestra and a *fortissimo* restatement of the downward stepping motif from the movement's opening bars (RM 21, Audio Cue 10:22). The energy recedes as the movement ends with the piano repeating the first subject accompanied by the clarinet playing a version of the opening two-bar melody (RM 23, Audio Cue 10:55).

### Movement II *Vivace*

The Scherzo is a brief but exhilarating *moto perpetuo*.

The instruments of the orchestra engage in vigorous conversation amid the piano's unrelenting octave semiquavers.

Oboe 

Varied forms of the theme are repeated in keys, usually only a semitone apart. These appearances are often announced with a rising signal from the muted trumpets and a splash of percussion. Beginning in D minor, then C# minor (RM 29, Audio Cue 0:24), D minor (RM 34, Audio Cue 0:47), D flat minor – the enharmonic of C# minor (RM 40) – and C (RM 42) before returning to D minor (RM 41, Audio Cue 1:36).

**Movement III Intermezzo: Allegro moderato**

Movement III begins with a powerful, leaping ostinato and an ominous statement in the trombones.

**Allegro moderato**

Contrabass 

This “sarcastically grotesque procession” maintains the modernist aspect begun in the first movement. The orchestra adds what have been described as “industrial touches, resembling immense foghorns or factory alarms”, reminiscent of the sounds heard in Prokofiev’s *Scythian Suite*.

Following this opening, the clarinet and oboe introduce two additional melodic themes (RM 55 and RM 56).

Clarinet in Bb 

Oboe 

A sudden key change at bar 19 (RM 58), has the key signature of C major but the music itself makes a semitone shift from B flat major to B major. From RM 61 there is a contrasting second theme played by the solo piano in B minor, before the descending clarinet melody from bar 7 returns (RM 62, Audio Cue 2:05).

**a tempo**

Piano

This, together with the other melodic themes from the opening, is developed by the piano and orchestra.

Section B of the music starts at bar 82 (RM 70, Audio Cue 3:26). The key signature is D minor, but the persistent use of G sharp creates diminished triads in the harmony. The theme is played by the oboe before being fragmented and then extensively developed by the piano (RM 72, Audio Cue 4:07).

Oboe

*p dolce un poco scherzando*

The opening ostinato returns at RM 75 (Audio Cue 4:47), followed by the remaining themes from Section A (RM 81, Audio Cue 5:50).

## Movement IV Allegro tempestoso

The final movement opens with a dizzying sense of swirling motion, vibrant splashes of colour, and virtuosity.



Musical score for Piano, Movement IV, Allegro tempestoso. The score is in 4/4 time and features a complex, swirling melody in the right hand and a more rhythmic accompaniment in the left hand. The key signature is one flat (B-flat). The dynamic marking is *ff* (fortissimo).

The first theme is reminiscent of the opening theme of the concerto, while the second theme, played by the clarinet, bassoon and violas (RM 99, Audio Cue 2:00) has a plaintive melody that is evocative of a Russian folksong.



Musical score for Clarinet in Bb and Bassoon, Movement IV, Allegro tempestoso. The score is in 4/4 time and features a plaintive melody in the Clarinet in Bb and a more rhythmic accompaniment in the Bassoon. The key signature is one flat (B-flat). The dynamic marking is *mf* (mezzo-forte).

The theme repeats with the kind of variation-development common in Russian music, at one point (RM 102), diverging into a brief prolation canon (the same melody occurring simultaneously at two different rates of speed). The orchestra ranges from the powerful to the poetic, with soft bell-like chords creating a shimmering soundscape (RM 126, Audio Cue 9:45). This concerto makes fierce technical demands on the soloist, who in this finale must maintain impressive strength through an extended cadenza (RM 117, Audio Cue 6:00) and the coda, which provides a fleeting echo of the first movement's opening theme (RM 127, Audio Cue 10:22) before rushing to a wild and exuberant conclusion.

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Access the recording on Spotify by visiting the following [link](#).

[Movement I, \*Andantino- Allegretto\*](#)

[Movement II, \*Scherzo- Vivace\*](#)

[Movement III, \*Intermezzo – Allegro Moderato\*](#)

[Movement IV, \*Finale- Allegro tempestoso\*](#)

## Audio and Score Excerpts

Score excerpts are from Public Domain, IMSLP at this [link](#).

Excerpt No.	Movement	Bars	Time	Activity	Page
1	Movement III, <i>Intermezzo</i>	Bars 1-24 (Start-RM 59)		Activity 1 Task 1	15
2	Movement III, <i>Intermezzo</i>	Bars 82-98 (RM 70-72)		Activity 1 Task 2	15
3	Movement I, <i>Andantino</i>	Bars 1-41 (RM 1-6)	0:00 - 3:12	Activity 2 Task 1	18
4	Movement I, <i>Andantino</i>	Bars 45-76 (RM 7-11)	3:12 - 4:10	Activity 2 Task 2	18
5	Movement IV, <i>Finale</i>	Bar 123 (RM 102)		Activity 3 Task 2	20
6	Movement III, <i>Intermezzo</i>	Bar 65 (RM 65)		Activity 4 Task 1	24
7	Movement III, <i>Intermezzo</i>	Bars 138-140 (RM 61)		Activity 4 Task 1	24
8	Movement III, <i>Intermezzo</i>	Bars 78-81 (RM 69)		Activity 4 Task 1	24
9	Movement II, <i>Scherzo</i>	Bars 1-32 (Start of movement-RM 28)	0:00 – 0:25	Activity 5 Task 2	27
10	Movement II, <i>Scherzo</i>	Bar 33- 63 (RM 29-33)	0:25	Activity 5, Task 3	27
11	Movement II, <i>Scherzo</i>	Bars 124-138 (RM 45- 47)	1:55	Activity 5, Task 4	27

## Additional Resources

[Soloist Horatio Gutierrez with score](#)

[Concert Performance Denis Matsuev and the LSO conducted by Gianandrea Noseda](#)

[Prokofiev Life and Context Part 1](#)

[Compose like Prokofiev](#) (3-hour course)

# Learning Activities

## Activity 1: Aural Skills and Musicology

In this activity students will investigate how the composer uses the concepts of music to create unity and contrast in the Movement 3 of the concerto.

This movement demonstrates Prokofiev's use of orchestral colour, as well as his ability to develop his melodic material. His orchestrations demonstrate the lessons learned from his teacher, Rimsky-Korsakov, considered one of the greatest authorities on orchestration.

### Task 1 Aural Skills

**Movement 3: Score Excerpt 1** Bars 1-24 (Start to RM 59) **Audio Excerpt:** 0:00-1:01

Focus question: Describe how the composer achieves *unity* and *contrast* in this excerpt. Refer to the concepts of *pitch* and *duration*.

Scaffolding questions

1. Describe the different pitch layers in the excerpt.
2. Identify the performing media of each layer.
3. Identify which layers continue throughout the excerpt and which do not.
4. Identify the different rhythms.
5. Explain how the rhythms create contrast.

### Task 2 Aural Skills

**Score and Audio Excerpt 1:** Bars 82-98 (RM 70-72), 3:27-4:07

Focus Question: Compare and contrast the music of this excerpt with excerpt 1.

Scaffolding Questions

- Compare the dynamics and texture of the two excerpts.
- Describe the piano part in excerpt 2.
- Describe the bass part in excerpt 2. Identify any similarities and differences with the bass ostinato in excerpt 1.
- Describe the melodic material in excerpt 2.
- Identify any additional tone colours or performing media present in excerpt 2.



### Task 3 Musicology

Most of Prokofiev's works are marked by bold melodies with wide leaps and unexpected turns of phrase. His rhythms are likewise bold, strong, forceful and frequently march-like.

Study the scores for the opening of "Dance of the Knights" from the ballet suite, *Romeo and Juliet* and the "Gavotte" from the *Classical Symphony* by Prokofiev. Compare them to the opening ostinato from the *Piano Concerto Intermezzo* and record your findings.

#### Movement 3 (Intermezzo) from *Piano Concerto No. 2* by Prokofiev

Allegro moderato

Violini I

Violini II

Viola

Violoncelli

Contrabassi

pesante

ff

ff

ff

#### Dance of the Knights from *Romeo and Juliet* by Prokofiev

senza sord.

senza sord.

senza sord.

unisa sord.

unis.

unis.

unis.

f pesante

f pesante

f pesante

f pesante

Gavotte from *Symphony No. 1 "Classical"* by Prokofiev

Non troppo allegro  $\text{♩} = 144$

The image shows a musical score for three string instruments: Violin I (Vln I), Violin II (Vln II), and Viola (Vla.). The score is in 3/4 time and G major. The tempo is marked "Non troppo allegro" with a quarter note equal to 144 beats per minute. The dynamics are marked "f pesante" for all three instruments. The Vln I and Vln II parts play a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, while the Vla part provides a rhythmic accompaniment with eighth notes. The score consists of four measures.

Vln I  
*f pesante*

Vln II  
*f pesante*

Vla.  
*f pesante*

## Activity 2: Score Reading, Listening and Musicology

In this activity, the students will investigate Prokofiev's use of pitch in Movement 1 of the concerto.

While a modernist, Prokofiev preferred to use traditional forms, such as Sonata Form. Prokofiev's harmony, while often dissonant, is always diatonic; sudden changes in key frequently add excitement to his music. Although there are atonal passages in his works, these are used (according to Prokofiev) "mainly for the sake of contrast, in order to bring the tonal passage to the fore."

Follow the score of the Movement 1, **Score Excerpt 3** bars 1-41 (RM 1-6), and answer the following questions to explore how Prokofiev combines diatonic and dissonant harmony as well as developing the first subject of this movement.

### Task 1

**Score and Audio Excerpt 3:** Bars 1-41 (RM 1 to 6), 0:00-3:12

Study the score excerpt of bars 1-41 and answer the following questions.

1. Describe the harmonies in the piano arpeggios in bars 3-5.
2. Identify the harmony outlined in the piano melody in bars 4-6
3. Compare the pitches of the first and second violins in bars 6-8.
4. Explain how the composer develops the motivic material from RM 1 (bars 9-12).
5. Identify the harmony of the piano in the first beat of bar 10.
6. Compare this harmony to that of the piano in bar 9.
7. Identify the key of the music at bar 12 and its relationship to the tonic key of G minor.
8. Describe how unity and variety are created in the solo piano music from bars 13-22 and the repeat of the opening music in bars 23-31.
9. Explain how the composer develops the motivic material from the opening twenty-two bars in the passage from bars 32-44.
10. Describe the techniques used by the composer to create a sense of anticipation as the music transitions to the next section.

### Task 2

**Score and Audio Excerpt 4:** Bars 45-76 (RM 7-11) 3:12-4:10

Study the score for bars 45-76 as you listen to the music. Answer the following question.

Identify the composer's use of the techniques, investigated in the first part of the movement, in this excerpt from the first movement.

- a) Melody and motif
- b) Harmony
- c)

## Task 3 Musicology

Research the meaning of the following terms

- i) Narrante
- ii) Pochissimo
- iii) Caloroso
- iv) Cantando

## Optional Extension task

“Prokofiev’s use of chromaticism has often caused confusion in musicological discussions. It does not seem to be consistent with the common practices of diatonic, late Romantic or atonal music.” (Olga Sologub, Prokofiev's Chromatic Practice in Theory, Society for Music Analysis Newsletter, Nov 2011).

Research and summarise the use of chromaticism in diatonic, late Romantic and atonal music. Compare this to Prokofiev’s stated aim of “mainly for the sake of contrast, in order to bring the tonal passage to the fore.”

## Activity 3: Performance

In this activity the students will learn and perform an arrangement of the second theme from Movement 4.

### Task 1

Prepare and perform this arrangement of the second theme from Movement 4 of the Concerto.

**Allegretto**

Flute

Clarinet in Bb

Violin

Piano

**Allegretto**

Bass

6

Fl.

Cl.

Vln. 1

Pno.

Bass

11

Fl.

Cl.

Vln. 1

Pno.

Bass

Detailed description: This system contains measures 11 through 15. The Flute and Clarinet parts are mostly rests, with some block chords appearing in measures 13-15. The Violin 1 part plays a melodic line with eighth notes and quarter notes. The Piano part has a complex texture with eighth and sixteenth notes in both hands. The Bass part provides a steady accompaniment with quarter and eighth notes.

16

Fl.

Cl.

Vln. 1

Pno.

Bass

Detailed description: This system contains measures 16 through 20. The Flute and Clarinet parts play melodic lines with eighth notes and quarter notes, often with slurs. The Violin 1 part continues its melodic line. The Piano part features a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes. The Bass part maintains its accompaniment with quarter and eighth notes.

21

Fl.

Cl.

Vln. 1

Pno.

Bass

26

Fl.

Cl.

Vln. 1

Pno.

Bass

4

The image shows a musical score excerpt for five instruments: Flute (Fl.), Clarinet (Cl.), Violin 1 (Vln. 1), Piano (Pno.), and Bass. The score is in 3/4 time and begins at bar 30. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The Flute, Clarinet, and Violin 1 parts play a melodic line of quarter notes, starting with a slur over the first four notes. The Piano part plays a harmonic accompaniment of chords, with the right hand playing chords and the left hand playing a bass line of quarter notes. The Bass part plays a bass line of quarter notes, starting with a slur over the first four notes. The score ends with a double bar line.

## Task 2

Compare the flute and piano parts beginning at bar 13 in this arrangement or the oboe and piano parts beginning at **Score Excerpt 5: RM 102** (bar 123) from the full score of the concerto. Describe the relationship between the pitch and duration of these parts.



## Activity 4: Composition and Musicology

In this activity, the students will investigate some of harmonic techniques used by Prokofiev and employ them in their own compositions.

Prokofiev's unique harmonic language has been described variously as "spicy" and "witty". Prokofiev viewed tonality as the foundation of his music but he explored the range of possibilities of tonal or diatonic music, including the use of dissonance. In this activity you will explore some of Prokofiev's harmonic language through observation of examples from Movement 3, *Intermezzo*, and the application of some harmonic techniques in your own composition.

### Task 1

Study the following passages from Movement 3 of the *Piano Concerto* and describe the harmonies used by Prokofiev.

#### Score Excerpt 6: Bar 65 (RM 65)

The musical score excerpt shows Bar 65 (RM 65) in 4/4 time. The Piano part is marked *f* and features a complex, dissonant harmonic structure with many accidentals. The string parts (Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Violoncello, and Contrabass) play a simple, rhythmic pattern of quarter notes, providing a harmonic foundation for the piano's complex chords.

1. Describe the harmonies in the string parts (violins and violas).
2. Describe the harmonies of the piano part.
3. Explain the difference between the string and piano harmonies.

### Score Excerpt 7: Bars 138-140 (RM 61)

Piano

1. Identify the harmonies in the upper piano staff (right hand).
2. Identify the harmonies in the lower piano staff (left hand).
3. Describe the relationship between the pitches on the two staves (What is the interval between the chords on the two staves?)

### Score Excerpt 8: Bars 78-81 (RM 69)

Piano

Compare and contrast Prokofiev's use of parallel harmonies between Score Excerpt 2 and 3 above.

## Task 2

Prokofiev uses these parallel harmonies with stepwise melodies, which is more manageable for the pianist. However, for this task, you may compose a melody with a wider variety of intervals. Include some chromatic passing notes for variety.

1. Compose an eight or sixteen-bar melody.
2. Harmonise your melody using Prokofiev's pattern of making the melody the flattened seventh of the chord. To achieve this, write the note a minor seventh below the melody and then add the pitch a major third above the lower note.
3. Harmonise any chromatic passages with parallel major thirds, as observed in Example 1. This will introduce some variety to your composition.

4. Perform your composition.
5. Add a further layer of harmony, following Prokofiev's pattern, adding an extra triad to each harmonisation, beginning on the pitch a major third below the original triad you have created.

### Task 3

Consider this statement by the composer, Prokofiev. "It is the duty of the composer, like the poet, the sculptor or the painter, to serve his fellow men, to beautify human life and point the way to a radiant future. Such is the immutable role of art as I see it."

1. Reflect on the differences between this statement and the strong feelings reportedly evoked by the first performance of this concerto. What experiences in the composer's life may have contributed to the statement recorded above?
2. What do you see as the role of the composer or artist? How does this inform your own practice as a composer?

### Optional Extension task

Harmonise a well-known melody, such as Beethoven's *Ode to Joy*, following the dominant seventh pattern used by Prokofiev and observe the effect on the tonality of the melody.

## Activity 5: Listening and Score Reading

In this activity, the students will investigate how Prokofiev creates unity and variety in Movement 2, *Scherzo*.

### Task 1

In this task, the students will listen to the second movement, *Scherzo*, from the Piano Concerto, following the on-screen score.

Click the link to listen to and watch [Horatio Gutierrez's performance of the Scherzo with the score](#). Note that the score has the solo piano part and a piano reduction of the orchestral parts.

### Task 2

Study the score of the opening thirty-two bars of the *Scherzo*. Answer the following questions.

**Score Excerpt 9:** Bars 1-32 (Start of movement-RM 28)

1. Describe the part played by the violins and violas in bars 1-8.
2. Describe the relationship between the violin and clarinet parts in bars 1-8.
3. Explain how the composer creates tension in the music in bars 1-16.
4. Identify the harmonies in bars 18 and 20 (the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> bars of RM 27).
5. Discuss the harmonies of the last four bars of RM 28 (bars 29-32) and their relationship to the opening bars of the movement.

### Task 3

Study the score of the next thirty bars of the movement **Score Excerpt 10:** Bars 33-63 (RM 29-33). Answer the following questions.

1. Identify the key of the music at bar 33 (RM 29).
2. Describe the relationship of this key to the tonic key of the movement (D minor).
3. Compare the first eight bars of this passage (bars 33-40) with the opening eight bars of the movement.
4. Discuss the time signatures in bars 44-51 (RM 30-32).
5. Explain how the composer creates tension and release in bars 45-63 (RM 31-34)

### Task 4

Study the score of **Score Excerpt 11:** Bars 124-138 (RM 45-47) and answer the following questions.

1. Identify the harmony in bars 127 and 130 (bars 4 and 8 of RM 45).
2. Compare and contrast the music at RM 45 with the opening of the movement. In your answer refer to the concepts of pitch and texture.

# Suggested Answers and Teaching Notes

## Activity 1

### Teaching Notes

- The first two tasks follow the design of NSW HSC Course 1 questions. They are also suitable for Stage 5 students and Stage 6 Course 2 students but do not require confidence with notation.
- Task 3 requires a basic level of score-reading ability.

## Task 1

### Scaffolding Questions

There are a number of different pitch layers in the excerpt:

- The two-bar ostinato in the cellos, doubles basses and bassoons.
- The trombones play a sustained note.
- The clarinet plays a descending triplet melody.
- The oboe and clarinet repeat an ascending melody.
- The piano plays a varied form of the opening ostinato.
- The opening ostinato continues throughout the excerpt. The other layers come and go.
- The crotchet ostinato rhythm.
- The sustained notes of the trombone and horns.
- The triplets of the clarinet.
- The quavers of the clarinet and oboe.
- The different rhythmic values are heard simultaneously, creating contrast.

### Focus question

The excerpt begins with an ostinato in the lower strings, which continues throughout, creating unity. Using staggered entries, a series of contrasting pitch and rhythmic layers are added creating contrast. Each layer is repeated before being replaced by a new melodic and rhythmic layer.

### Pitch

Unity	Contrast
The excerpt begins with a two-bar ostinato in the cellos, doubles basses and bassoons. The key is G minor but the immediate	In the third bar, the trombones play a sustained D or dominant pitch. This is echoed by the muted horns, creating unity and contrast.

<p>inclusion of Db and Ab in the ostinato introduces a chromatic colour to the pitch, with the augmented fourth (tri-tone) and diminished second used melodically.</p> <p>The major ninth between the first two notes, G and A, is a further example of the dissonant pitch material.</p> <p>The pitches of the ostinato changes in bar 7, bar 15, bar 18, bar 19 but the crotchet rhythm and intervallic shape continue, creating unity.</p> <p>The trombones enter in bar 3 with a sustained D (dominant), which is repeated by the muted horns.</p> <p>The horns develop the sustained note into a two-pitch motif, which is repeated.</p> <p>The clarinet melody includes Db, creating unity with the opening ostinato.</p> <p>The Gb (enharmonic F#) and F natural add to the chromatic nature of the music.</p> <p>The violins and violas play a varied for of the descending melody.</p> <p>The piano bass pitches are based on G and Db, creating unity with the opening ostinato.</p>	<p>In bar seven, the clarinet begins a descending triplet melody.</p> <p>The oboe and clarinet repeat an ascending melody, beginning at bar eleven.</p> <p>The piano enters at bar 15 playing a varied form of the opening ostinato.</p>
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## Duration

Unity	Contrast
<p>The crotchet rhythm of the opening ostinato continues throughout the excerpt.</p> <p>Each melodic pattern is repeated, creating unity.</p>	<p>Each pitch layer plays a different rhythmic pattern.</p> <p>The cellos and double basses play crotchets.</p> <p>The trombones and horns play sustained notes which contrast with the crotchet ostinato.</p> <p>The clarinet triplets and oboe quavers create further contrast with the crotchet ostinato.</p> <p>The strings play <i>pizzicato</i> semiquavers from bar 11, adding to the texture and creating further contrast.</p> <p>The piano rhythm is the most complex, with quintuplet and triplet scales filling in the intervals between the ostinato pitches.</p>

## Task 2

### Scaffolding Questions

1. Excerpt 2 employs a softer dynamic and a much thinner texture than excerpt 1.
2. The piano in excerpt 2 plays a series of eight repeated ascending arpeggios, followed by seven descending scales. These two gestures are then combined in the final part of the excerpt.
3. The bass part in excerpt 2 continues to emphasise the crotchet beat with its leaping intervals. However, the pattern is not as wide or long as the ostinato in excerpt 1. It mainly uses just two pitches. The dissonant harmonies continue.
4. The oboe plays a sustained chromatic melody which is repeated, in a slight variation, an octave higher by the flute.
5. The tambourine is the most prominent new tone colour. The strings are playing pizzicato, which matches the softer dynamic.

### Focus Question:

- Excerpt 2 provides contrast to excerpt 1 through changes to dynamics, texture, tone colour and melodic material. The use of dissonant harmonies.
- The music of excerpt 2 is lighter and less intense than excerpt 1.
- It has a softer dynamic and thinner texture.
- The pizzicato strings and tambourine introduce new tone colours that contrast with the heavy bass and brass sounds of excerpt 1.
- The oboe and flute play a sustained chromatic melody, which contrasts with the piano part in excerpt 2 and the scalar melodies of clarinet and oboe in excerpt 1.
- The crotchet beat continues to be emphasised in excerpt 2.
- The bass intervals are less extreme and comprise two pitches for much of the excerpt. These are D and G#. This augmented 4th or tri-tone continues the dissonant sound of excerpt 1.
- The key signature in excerpt 1 is Bb, while in excerpt 2 it is D minor.
- The piano repeats rapid ascending arpeggios. These are then replaced by rapid descending scales in the second part of the excerpt. These accompany the woodwind melodies.

## Task 3

The leaps in the *Classical Symphony*, third movement are all octaves. The melodic notes do include some chromaticism but the intervals of the leaps are always an octave. The ostinato in *Romeo and Juliet* has leaps wider than octave contained within the harmonies of the horns and cellos, although the bass notes themselves move by smaller intervals (thirds and fifths). The music remains in the key of E minor. However, chromaticism is introduced by bar 7.

By comparison, the ostinato that begins the third movement of the piano concerto begins with an interval of a ninth, with the third note D flat being an augmented fourth above the tonic G and the following Ab, while a fifth above the Db, is a minor ninth from the tonic note. These intervals are reduced in the cellos and double basses, while in the bassoon part, they are expanded to create a

series of twelfths and ninths. The timpani part of the concerto has fifths and minor thirds interspersed with minor sevenths.

## Activity 2

### Teaching Notes

- Teachers may consider the following observation. "The use of direct chromatic movement to shift tonality by a semitone is, like modulation by deceptive resolution, nothing new to tonal music ... The essential difference between Beethoven's and Prokofiev's applications of the technique is that Beethoven prepares the shift deliberately and at a point of structural articulation, whereas Prokofiev accomplishes it fluently and without preparation, often in mid-phrase. With Beethoven, the arrival of a new key is experienced as a structural event; with Prokofiev it is integrated into the textural fabric and subordinated to the rhythmic and melodic momentum." (Bass, R. 1988, Prokofiev's technique of chromatic displacement, p. 199)
- When listening and following the passage in bars 13 to 22, it is important to listen for the melodic line, which begins with the crotchet melody below the treble stave.
- The Dolmetsch Online Musical Dictionary is a useful resource.
- The period-based summary of Chromaticism on Wikipedia is a helpful resource for students. Other references can be even more complex.
- There are also six posters in this Creative Commons collection by Toby Rush that explain and summarise aspects of chromaticism. <https://tobyrush.com/theorypages/>

### Task 1

1. The harmonies in the piano arpeggios in bars 3 to 5 are perfect fifths and fourths. The tonality is deliberately obscured, especially by the addition of the major second, A, in place of the third.
2. The piano melody in bars 4 to 6 follows a similar pattern with the tonic and dominant pitches predominant and the use of the 4<sup>th</sup> (C). However, the minor 3<sup>rd</sup> (Bb) finally makes an appearance in the last beat of bar 5.
3. The first violins begin with the tonic and dominant of G minor. However, chromaticism is soon introduced in the form of the E natural, Ab, B natural, before the sudden chromatic shift to C# in bars 8. The melodic writing, while chromatic in nature, also suggests a Phrygian mode, commencing on G. The second violins play a six-note chromatic scale in bar 6 (hexachord), followed by a five-note C major scale in bar 7 (pentatonic).
4. The composer repeats the motivic material, with chromatic harmonic shifts. The accompanying string parts follow the same harmonic pattern, with the material from bars 6 and 7.
5. The harmony of the piano in the first beat of bar 10 is F#. Once again, the tonality is obscured. This time by both a B natural (4<sup>th</sup>) and a G# (2<sup>nd</sup>).
6. The piano harmony in bar 9 is G (minor). The harmonic shift from bar 9 to 10 is a semitone. Theorists and critics describe the sudden shift in harmony or key in Prokofiev's music as "wrong notes". This is a way of highlighting the notes' incongruous effect within tonal contexts. Often consisting of sudden shifts by step or half-step, wrong-note passages sound out of context because they smoothly connect distantly related harmonies in the middle of a phrase.



7. The key of the music at bar 12 is C, which is the subdominant of the tonic key of G minor. Once again, the tonality is not evident. Chromaticism, in the form of an Ab and then an F#, in the second half of the bar, further obscures the tonality.
8. The melodic phrases in the solo piano music from bars 13 to 22 use repetition to create unity. Each phrase is repeated, sometimes in sequence, creating variety as well as unity. In the repeat of the opening music, in bars 23 to 31, the same pitch material and harmonic changes are heard. However, the woodwind now play the piano melody and the piano plays the string parts, creating variety through the change of tone colours. The strings play irregular pizzicato, double stopping chords adding further variety, instead of the sustained notes of the cellos and double basses in bars 6 to 8.
9. The composer uses the different motivic material from the opening twenty-two bars in the following ways.
  - The strings play the piano melody from bars 13 to 22. Their time signature is 4/4.
  - The woodwind double the string parts.
  - The piano plays in 12/8. Its bass part is taken from the opening piano theme. It begins on the tonic note G.
  - The right hand of the piano plays a series of arpeggios and chords, constructed from seconds and ninths.
  - The piano then reintroduces the main dotted-note motif in bar 35.
  - At bar 37 (RM 5), the piano plays ascending and descending versions of the violin scales from bars 6 and 7.
  - At bar 39, the clarinet play semiquaver triplets, based on minor thirds, heard in the very opening, also played by the clarinet.
10. The composer to creates a sense of anticipation in bars 41 to 44 (RM 6) by:
  - The ascending chromatic melody in violins and woodwinds.
  - The use of quavers and repeated notes in the violins, together with the crotchets in the woodwind.
  - The divisi in 3 of the violins, creating a thicker texture.
  - The contrary motion in the violas, cellos and double basses.
  - The diminution in the woodwinds and violas in bars 43 and 44, reinforced by the semiquaver tremolo in the violins, cellos and double basses.

## Task 2

**Melody and motif:** The woodwinds introduce the melodic material, which, again, is constructed of wide leaps which include notes not related to the diatonic harmonies of A minor. Much use is made of motivic repetition in both the piano and orchestral parts.

**Harmony:** Prokofiev begins this section in A minor but quickly introduces chromatic notes to colour the harmonies. The use of chromaticism increases when the piano enters in bar 49. The unprepared semitone harmonic shift is used in bar 53, and repeated before the music returns suddenly to A minor in bar 57 (RM 8). Altered arpeggios are used to decorate the repetition of the melody in bars 58 to 66.

## Task 3

*Narrante:* narrating, in a declamatory manner

*Pochissimo:* a very little, the least possible, the bare minimum

*Caloroso:* with passion, with warmth, passionately

*Cantando:* in a singing style, *cantabile*, graceful and well blended

## Optional Extension task

The aim here is for students to differentiate between the use of chromaticism to create harmonic movement i.e. modulation and its association with structure in the Baroque and Classical periods and its use in the Nineteenth century to create colour and drama as well as signify a break with the tonal foundations of Western music. This eventually led to serialism and the abandonment of diatonicism. Prokofiev's use of chromaticism, while an expression of freedom, appears alongside recognisable diatonic centres.

## Activity 3

### Teaching Notes

- Task 2: The passage from bar 13 in the arrangement is referred to as a prolation canon, in which the same melody is heard simultaneously at two different rates of speed, or two different rhythmic values. This is an opportunity to introduce terms such as augmentation and diminution to students.

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## Activity 4

### Teaching Notes

- In Score Excerpt 2 (Bars 138 to 140), it is unclear, in the score, whether the final melodic D of each bar is a natural or a sharp. D natural would continue the pattern of the previous chords, but a D# would maintain the accidental in the lower D earlier in the bar and provide a leading note to the following E. The absence of a natural in the chord at the start of the following bar suggests that it is a D natural.

### Task 1

#### Score Excerpt 6: Bar 65 (RM 65)

1. The string parts are in thirds and mostly present diatonic triads of A and D major. The first and last harmonies introduce raised or major sevenths, creating a dissonance with the root note of each triad (A and G respectively).
2. The harmonies of the piano part are all major thirds. These follow the chromatic movement of the melody in parallel motion.
3. The string harmonies vary between major and minor thirds, depending on the chord, while the piano harmonies remain major thirds throughout, creating dissonance with the string harmonies.

#### Score Excerpt 7: Bars 138 to 140 (RM 61)

1. The piano harmonies are a series of parallel triads. The triads are different in each hand. Note that both hands are in the treble clef at RM 81. This is an example of multi-tonality, a technique employed by Prokofiev. Each triad is constructed of a major third and an augmented fourth, creating a minor seventh with the bass note of the triad. The harmonies form a series of dominant sevenths, each without the fifth, creating a series of unresolved tension.
2. The same pattern of dominant seventh harmonies are used in the lower piano staff
3. The pitches on the lower staff begin a major third below the pitches of the upper staff. When combined, the two triads create a harmony of a major ninth chord with an augmented fifth (sometimes named as a 9(#5), aug9, #5 9 and +9, as in C9(#5)). The pitches of the two triads form an (almost) whole-tone scale.

#### Score Excerpt 8: Bars 78 to 81 (RM 69)

1. The triads in bars 78 to 81 are in first inversion. They also move in parallel motion but the triads change tonality from minor to major in a scale-chord harmony. Both hands or staves are playing the same pitches, an octave apart.

## Activity 5

### Teaching Notes

- The audio cues are from the Sydney Symphony Spotify tracks. This is to maintain uniformity with the other activities. The time cues for the Gutierrez YouTube performance are as follows:
- Task 2: 11:00, Task 3: 11:26, Task 4: 12:39.

### Task 2

1. The violins and violas play a pizzicato quaver tonic and dominant pedal point in bars 1 to 8.
2. The clarinets are also playing the tonic and dominant notes, in semiquavers (diminution) parts in bars 1 to 8. The clarinets play the notes in alternation, rather than the simultaneous double stopping of the strings.
3. The descending chromatic, played by the oboe, bassoon and cellos creates tension through the dissonance with the pitches of the pedal point. The solo piano introduces rapid chromatic pitches from bar 11 (RM 25) which also create tension with the tonic pedal in the strings. Finally, chromatic pitches are introduced in the violins and viola.
4. The harmony in bars 18 and 20 is Ab. This is the augmented fourth of the tonic D minor, which is traditionally considered a dissonant interval.
5. The harmonies of the last four bars are Bb and A minor. These chords are played by the woodwind, piano and upper strings. Bb and A are the two pitches of the opening piano passage. In the closing four bars, they are heard above a repeated G and D in the double basses.

### Task 3

1. The key of the music at bar 33 (RM 29) is C# minor.
2. C# minor is a semitone lower than the tonic (D minor). This semitone movement or modulation is a common feature of Prokofiev's writing in the concerto.
3. There are a number of differences to be observed:
  - The pitches of the piano part have changed to match the new key. However, they are still the sixth and fifth of the key.
  - The woodwind are now playing the repeated quaver tonic-dominant pedal point.
  - The clarinet semiquaver pattern is not included.
  - The strings are playing a different version of the pedal point, with contrasting sustained and semiquaver-quaver rhythms.
  - The descending chromatic melody is played by the second violins and violas. The pattern of the melody changes in the third and fourth bars. Each note is played once, and not repeated, propelling the music into the next phrase. This may be considered a form of diminution, as the cumulative value of each pitch changes from a crotchet to a quaver in the third and fourth bars.

4. Changes of time signatures, in bars 44 to 51 (RM 30 to 32), create asymmetry in the music.
5. Tension is created in bars 45 to 63 (RM 31 to 34) by the introduction of chromaticism, a thickening of the texture (especially in the strings), and the use of ascending pitches in the accompanying string and woodwind parts. At RM 33, the music settles in E major, the relative major of C# minor. The softer dynamics and the use of ostinato and repeated patterns, with only slight variation, provides a release from the tension of the previous bars.

## Task 4

The harmony in bars 127 and 130 is Eb major. Once again, this chord is a semitone away from the tonic key of the movement, D minor. However, it is different from the Ab harmony used in the same relative bars in the opening passage of the movement.

Pitch	Texture
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ The key is the same – D minor</li> <li>◇ The passage begins with the same music played by the piano, strings and clarinet.</li> <li>◇ To these are added tonic-dominant figures played by the trumpet and flute, bassoons and horns.</li> <li>◇ The descending chromatic melody is not heard at RM 45.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ The texture is mostly the same in both passages.</li> <li>◇ The exception is the descending chromatic melody, which is played but three layers in the opening but it not heard in the later passage.</li> <li>◇ The texture thickens at RM 46, with the woodwind taking over the repeated quaver accompaniment pattern.</li> <li>◇ The divisi middle and lower strings add to the texture. However, the <i>piano</i> dynamic balances the effect of the increasing texture.</li> </ul>